

Remarks

Claim rejections under 35 USC 103

1. Claims 1, 5 and 10 to 13 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norberg (EP 126833 A) in view of Brady, Jr. (US 3896246). These claims have now been cancelled.
2. Claim 14 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norberg (EP 126833 A) in view of Popat (US 6001209).
3. The Applicant agrees with the Examiner that Norberg discloses all of the features of Claim 14, except the feature that the backing is provided by a series of separate backing pieces each for a respective one of the pockets. As discussed in the Applicant's previous response, Norberg describes a rolled web of plastic pockets on a backing sheet of protective paper 18, and a machine for unrolling the web, for inserting dispatch notes or other communications into the pockets and for separating the plastic pockets from the protective paper 18. Referring to page 3, lines 1 to 9, of Norberg, the pockets comprise two plastic films which are welded together along a bottom weld 1 and two lateral welds 2,3, with perforations 6 between adjacent pockets. The lower plastic film has an adhesive outer surface covered by the protective paper 18. The perforations go through the plastic films, but not through the protective paper 18. The protective paper is therefore continuous. This is said to be an essential characteristic feature of the invention of Norberg, page 3, lines 8 and 9. In the web of Norberg, it is primarily the protective paper 18 which holds the pockets together in the web, and it is the continuity of the protective paper 18 which enables the web to be drawn through the dispensing machine of Figure 2.
4. The Examiner has suggested that Popat discloses separate backing pieces 286 and that it would have been obvious to have the backing pieces of Norberg be made separate as taught by Popat.
5. The Applicant strongly refutes the suggestion that Popat discloses separate backing pieces 286. The backing strip 286 of Popat is shown in Figure 12 and described at col. 8, lines 12-60, of Popat. Although it is said at col. 8, lines 19-21, that the note assembly 280 is divided into individual notes 290a-c, the notes 290a-c are not separate at that stage because, as stated in Popat, the note assembly 280 is divided "by perforation lines" 288a,b. The notes 290a-c may be separated from each other after printing (col. 8, lines 29-32) or before printing (col. 8, lines 36-40) by tearing along the perforation lines 288a,b. The user can then remove the backing strip 286 in order to adhere a note to a substrate (col. 8, lines 43-45). There is no suggestion in Popat that the notes 290 may be connected by the

perforation lines 288 while the backing strip 286 is at the same time divided into separate backing pieces. It follows therefore, despite what is said in the office action, that there is no suggestion in Popat as to what effect, if any, the provision of separate backing pieces would have on the ability of the notes to be separated when they are ready to be used.

6. In summary, Norberg does not teach separate backing pieces. Indeed, Norberg suggests that it is essential that the backing strip is not weakened, for example by perforations. Furthermore, Popat does not teach separate backing pieces, but instead teaches perforations in the backing strip. The Applicant submits that there would be no motivation, explicit or implicit, for the skilled person to combine the teachings of Norberg and Popat. Indeed, the clear teaching of Norberg is that the backing strip should not even have perforations. Furthermore, the Applicant submits that, even if the skilled person were to combine the teachings of Norberg and Popat, the result would not be a combination as claimed in claim 14, which requires a series of separate backing pieces. Instead, the result would be a continuous backing strip with perforations. Accordingly, the Applicant submits that the invention of claim 14 is not obvious over Norberg in view of Popat.

7. Claims 15-16 and 18-21 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norberg (EP 126833 A) in view of Popat (US 6001209).

8. Claims 15, 16 and 18-21 are dependent on, and within the scope of, claim 14 and therefore are distinguished from Norberg and Popat at least by the feature discussed above.

9. Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norberg in view of Popat and further in view of Brady, Jr. (US 3896246).

10. Claim 17 is dependent on, and within the scope of, claim 14. Brady. Brady does not provide any teaching of the distinguishing feature of claim 14 as discussed above, and no suggestion has been made in the office action that Brady does. Accordingly, the Applicant submits that the invention of claim 17 is not obvious over Norberg in view of Popat and further in view of Brady at least for the reasons discussed above in relation to claim 14.

11. In claim 20, a typing error has been corrected.

12. The Applicant believes that she has responded fully to all of the matters raised in the office action and that all of the claims of the application are allowable. A notice of allowance is therefore respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted

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